

Acceler8 Recreation Opportunities

Reservoir Public Access, April 4, 2006

Photograph of the USACE/SFWMD Ten Mile Creek Reservoir near Ft. Pierce, Florida.



Large scale surface water reservoirs are critically important facilities proposed to support the restoration of the Everglades ecosystem. These facilities, while designed specifically to meet the hydrologic goals of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), will also be consistent with the Public Recreational Use and Access Policy and make available numerous public recreational opportunities. However, the implementation of recreation access must be considered against the potential compromises to the intended uses, goals and objectives of the project.

Typically, it is anticipated that a number of diverse recreational opportunities will be associated with the proposed reservoirs. The permits, designs and construction of each project will incorporate a reasonable dedication of lands and finances to provide facilities for a variety of nature based recreational activities. These recreational activities will be consistent with and not constrain the purpose of the project and will be governed by the applicable District rules. Pedestrian access will be generally facilitated around the perimeter embankments. Boating and other public access activities will be supported in and around the inflow, outflow, and perimeter canal network.

The District is optimistic about the future opportunity to facilitate public boating inside the Acceler8 reservoirs. However, this optimism must be tempered with a prudent approach to the successful operation of the large-scale water resource systems formulated to meet the goals of environmental restoration.

A step-by-step process will be used by the District in a proactive manner to incorporate and evaluate how public boating can be a part of these projects over time. Acceler8 reservoir project engineering designs and permits will specifically include boat ramps. Construction will create the earthworks necessary to support levee ramps, roads, bridges and areas that will be set aside for future public boating access. Initially, these earthworks will provide District Operation and Maintenance Staff with working boat ramps. Like the existing Stormwater Treatment Areas, with passive and consumptive recreation, the Acceler8 reservoir projects will be constructed and then operated for some period, possibly 1 to 2 years as necessary, to allow the agency to discover any unknown conditions and become familiar with operational issues that effect public boating access. After this period the earthworks within the Acceler8 reservoirs will be configured for public use by constructing items such as necessary to achieve this purpose.

Facts:

- Acceler8 reservoir projects will be permitted and designed to include dual lane public boat ramps.
- Project permits, designs and construction will provide the facilities for other types of public access.
- During levee construction the necessary earthworks to accommodate public boating will be built.
- Project construction will be completed so when the public boat ramp is finished reengineering, demolition, re-permitting, or interruption to the project's operation should not be necessary.
- Acceler8 reservoir projects will be operated for some reasonable period before incorporating public boating.
- Before public boating begins, the earthworks will be improved with the usual facilities necessary for a public boat ramp.
- The public boat ramp will also be a working boat ramp for SFWMD staff.

